The Gleaner

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2020-2021

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The Gleaner is a theme-based literary journal edited by the undergraduate students at Delaware Valley University.

We showcase all forms of written work as well as artwork and photography pieces.

This year's theme is Everyone Has a Story.

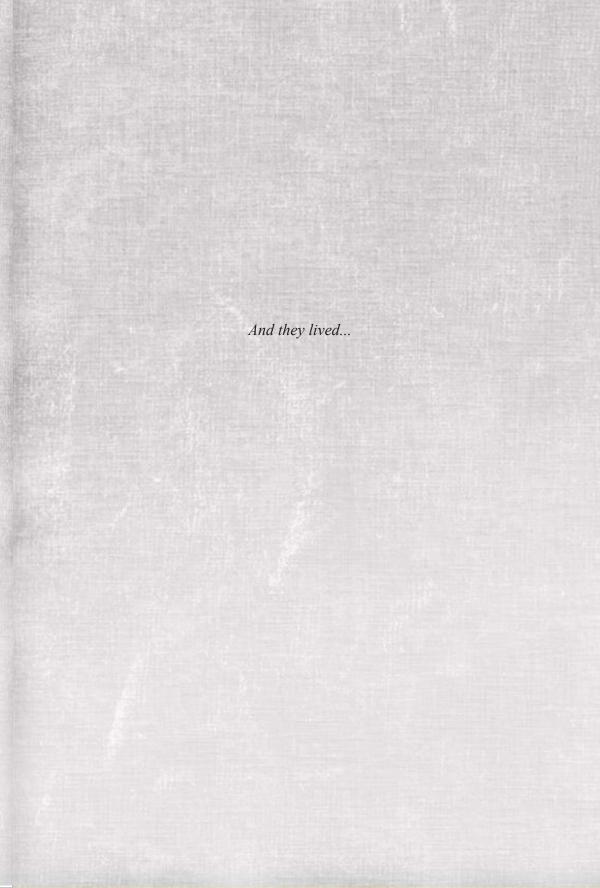


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J Will Rever Forget by Paige Reali

he end tastes
Bittersweet on my tongue
like copper and cake all at once
I remember the sharp bite of starlight
on my skin when I wrote you poetry
promising a forever
(I guess forever isn't so long after all)

Though the tears streaming down my face are evidence of the wounds
You bore into my flesh
My hands are not clean
and your blood beneath my fingernails
is still wet
I can't help but think
This is my fault too

I see the agony carving gouges in your eyes
Old habits do die hard because my hand still reaches out my heart wrenching in my chest at the sight of your pain

And yet
the taste of freedom is fresh and new
a twisting future filled with endless opportunity
all mine to claim
If only I can stand to see you bleed

Even now I can't regret
the way your sky eyes met mine so earnestly
at the genesis of our love
the way you looked at me
your defenses stripped open
the parapets crushed to ash
the way you seemed to stare through my flesh
into my soul
as if there was no one else in this world
Besides me and you in a quiet room

Images and ghost sensations of your pianist fingers and wet lips dancing across my skin haunt me in the witching hours Then, I do not think of your darkness I do not think of mine

Instead, I see where your fingertips have left burning trails and swirling tattoos in the recesses of my mind a different kind of forever branding me with a love so consuming I once promised you my life Even in your absence You are still my muse

We may end in ruin but I will never forget the taste of our first kiss, the taste of our last

Nothing Matters To a Tree by Maggie Driscoll

othing matters to a tree.
it stands a martyr, wild and free.
Does the mountain know you're driving through it?

No thought, no worry, just grow and do it. Ground unworried roots sewed to it. Nothing matters to a tree.

Seasons come and seasons go, flowers fall and cold winds blow.

Does the mountain know you're driving through it?

Man may fell you, drill on through you, your roots are deeper than they are used to. Nothing matters to a tree.

Do not go slowly, grow, grow, grow. Hold deep those roots and what they know. Nothing matters to a tree. Does the mountain know you're driving through it?

Kabul Sikh by Arun Kapur

rounds of historical paradise.

Flowers that blossomed from the earth so bright.

Kites fought in the skies that brought joy amongst their flight.

Walking down the Silk route and see all its glory.

Once home, now is another story.

Gone what once was promised and snatched away in pain.

Mother nature fights back never in vain.

My fallen Sikh brothers and sisters taken, what was the gain?

Snatched away and left rubbles with no say.

Hate will not win; love is here to stay.

Please forget not my fallen brothers and sisters in a place of war zone.

Never forgotten, not forget, never to be unknown.



Weight of the **W**orld by Jared Saias

his game of life is full of mystery,

So many questions about how to effectively spend time.

Everyone is on a steady rise to where they want to be, the climb.

The constant anxiety of the right choice leaves the boy jittery.

"Where does he go, what does he do?", a heavy mind trying to find authenticity.

When the pressure is on, will you conquer it, or will you succumb to slime?

With every step the boy takes, he is filled with doubt, mistaken for a mime.

Unsettled about his tenses, this is "his"-story.

That boy is me.

Although I am fearful,

I need to set him free.

I want to be a symbol for strength, someone who is gleeful.

Encapsulated at times with doubt, there is an end I can see.

Only time will tell, patient and peaceful,

Will the weight of the world reign evil and cause me to flee?

Stars & Stripes by Lysette Eloi

'm not a star. I'm not a big ball of gas that shines bright. I don't blur or obscure vision. I am just there.

Oh, what it must be like to be a star.

To shine brighter then all else. I envy you.

I come and go and no one is there to admire me.

I diminish over time and as I begin to feel myself becoming whole again no one is there to see.

They call it phases but I think it's just me.

I am alone in a gravity free place surrounded by undiscovered and mysterious places.

I'm not special.

Once upon a time I was a goal and now I'm the stepping stone. The one that everyone steps on to get higher. I was out of your reach yet you caught me. You've figured me out. There's nothing I can do without your knowledge, I'm not free.

I feel trapped in free space. I feel enclosed and captured. All I wanted was to be loved and adored, and for a second I felt what I thought I wanted but it's not what I expected. You were never supposed to reach me. I was untouchable until you touched me.

You took one step and then many, probing me and taking parts of me and now here I sit. I am a large mass floating in an abyss of nothingness.

In an open area of darkness. No longer admired for my beauty or mystery but only used. I wish I were a star so you couldn't come close, I wish I could shine so that I could be needed for more than my scientific makeup. I wish to be so hot that I am unattainable. Then you couldn't touch me, then you would have to just admire me, I may still be alone but perhaps I would feel finally free the way I used to be.

2.5.21

by Lydia Anderson-Dearborn

he clock ticks, time passes.

I can't focus - everything and everyone around me is a reminder that I am $\,$ r a $\,$ w $\,$, I am broken, I am weeping

The messages that never arrive, the laughter I hear down the hall, the chill down the windows

down my spine

Reminders that I am here and I am not where I want to be Every day is the same start over, the same script that I like coffee and the smell of lightning and I hate raisins.

And it's thick, thick and sticky

like the blood squeezed through my heart

Thick, like choking on peanut butter.

I feel ancient, ancient and forgotten;

The world spins yet I can only remain, a weathered distant memory that cannot help but look better than it really was through the rose-tinted lenses that come with the passage of time.

I can't help but suffocate on the isolation

as I wait for the cycle to restart:

hello, I love you, I'll never leave, goodbye--

Jading **S**moke by Arun Kapur

moke fades, the mirrors surface.

Clock, tick, tock.

Loaded and lock the Glock.

Ready to pull the trigger to make it all stop.

Nightmares real that you have sewn.

No bridge broken will be enough to dethrone.

Me. Me. Me.

Put it down, walk with me across.

Cut ties to the pain and fight up forward your loss.

Jmagine by Maggie Driscoll

magine A pond, a tree.

Humming softly with sounds of the small life And their business.

And I

Sit watching, breathing in a peaceful place for tranquil thoughts

Of us

And the small life With their business.

Coming, going by the ripples of the pond, humming softly with the sound of love.

And I,

an observer, watch you, your feet in the water,

among the small life, and their business.

And you,

smile at me, beneath the tree, and beckon for me to sit

With you

and watch all the small life, and their business.

As Great as Me by Maggie Driscoll

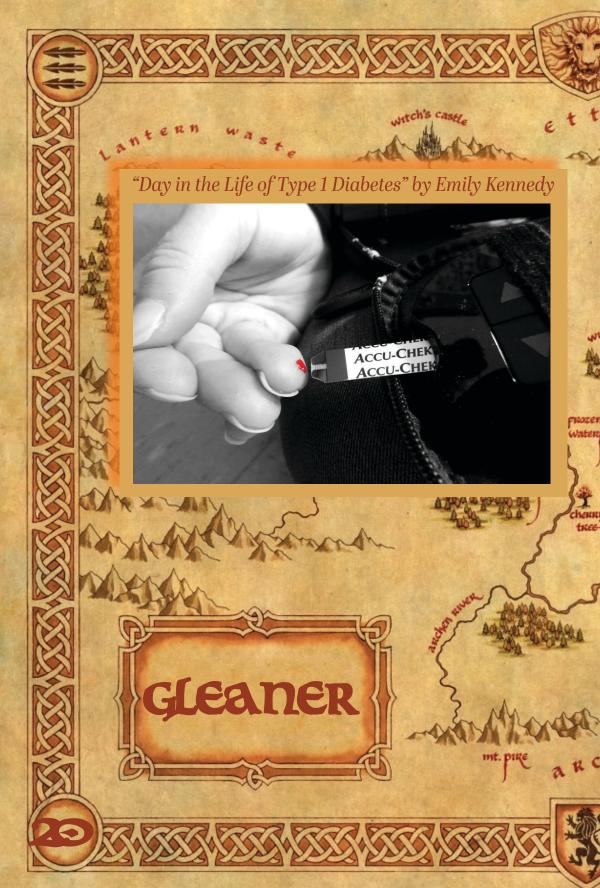
walk into the library and see stories about people more famous than me.

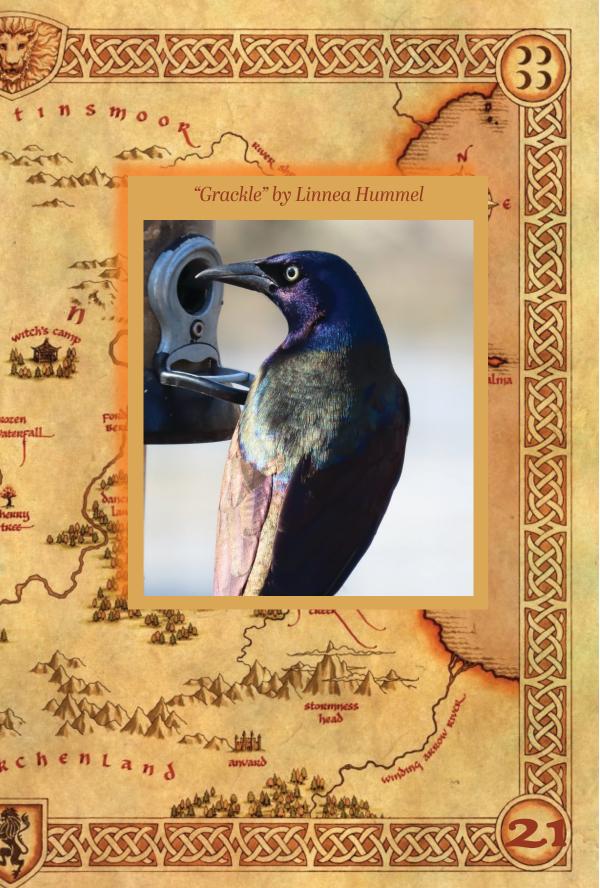
Now I wonder will I ever be a book and have somebody wonder if they can ever be as great as me.

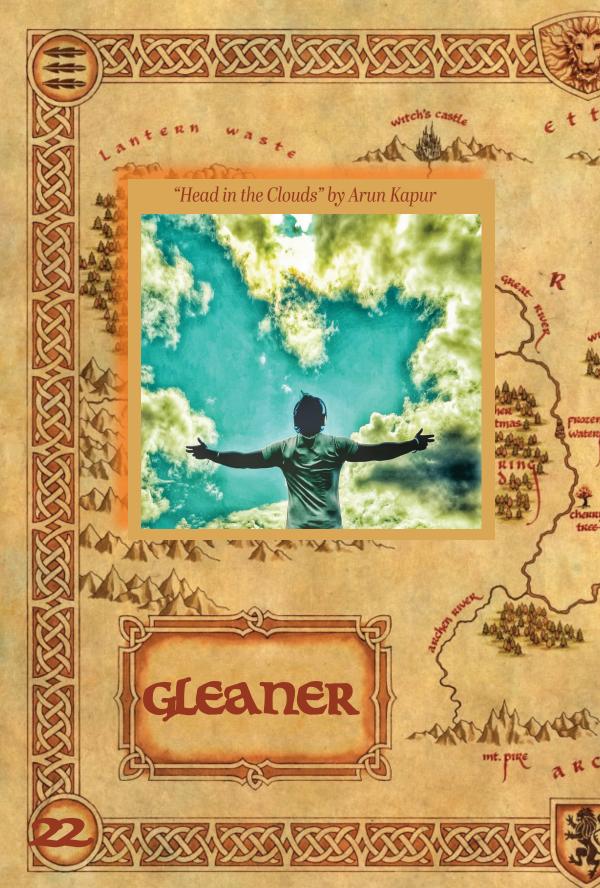
See my name on book I'll title-a story to last-the one that will make someone wonder if they'll ever be as great as me.

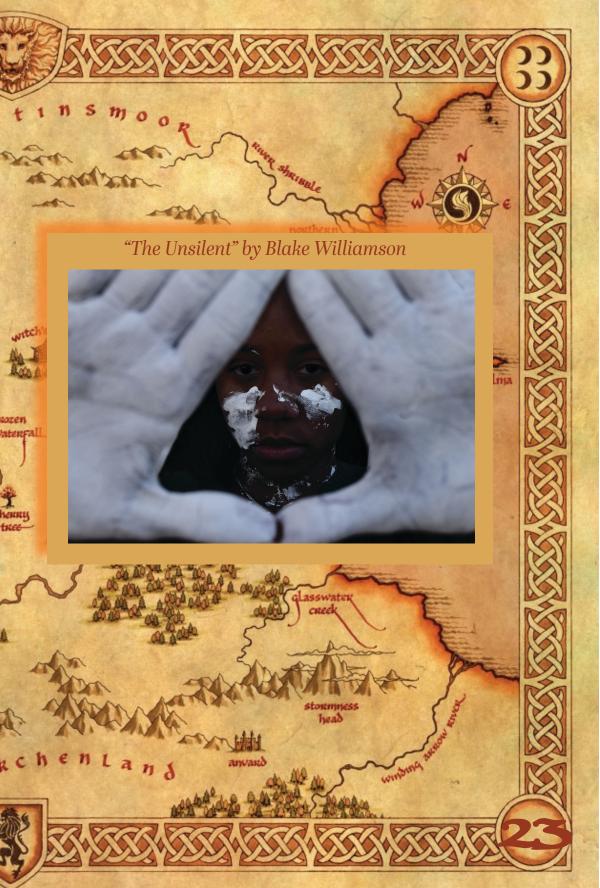


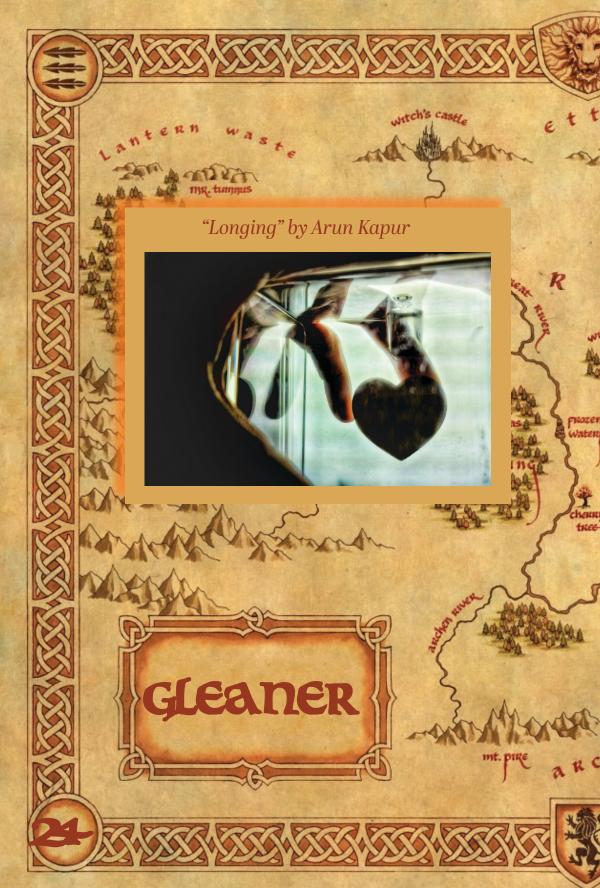


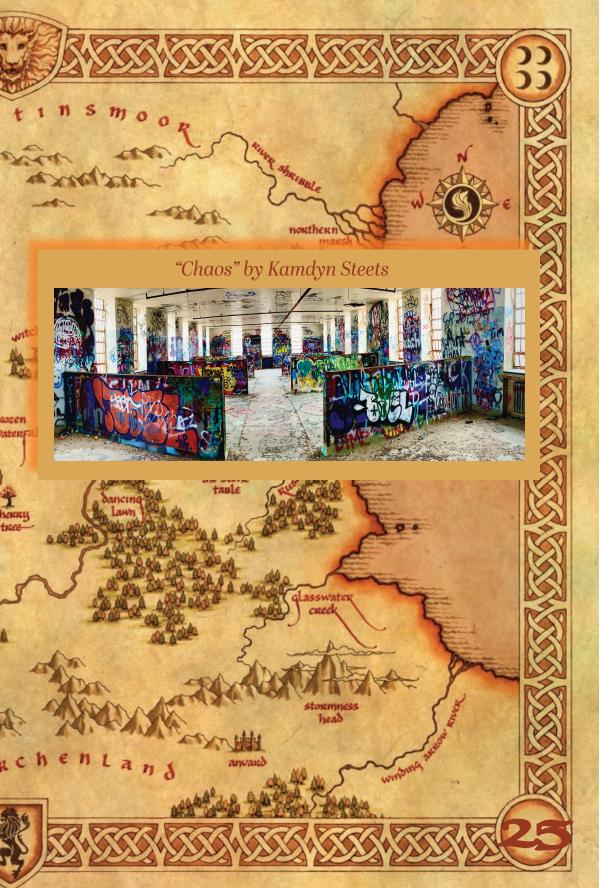


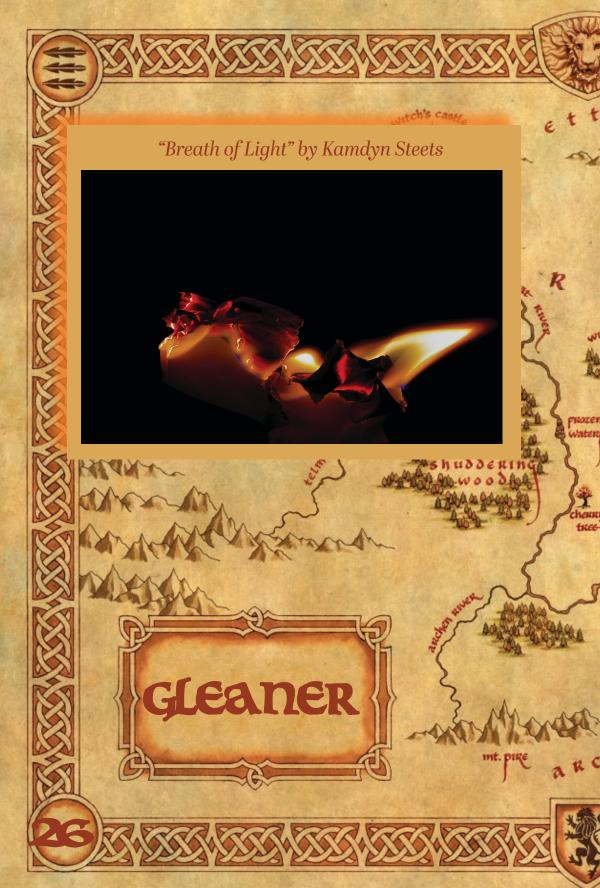


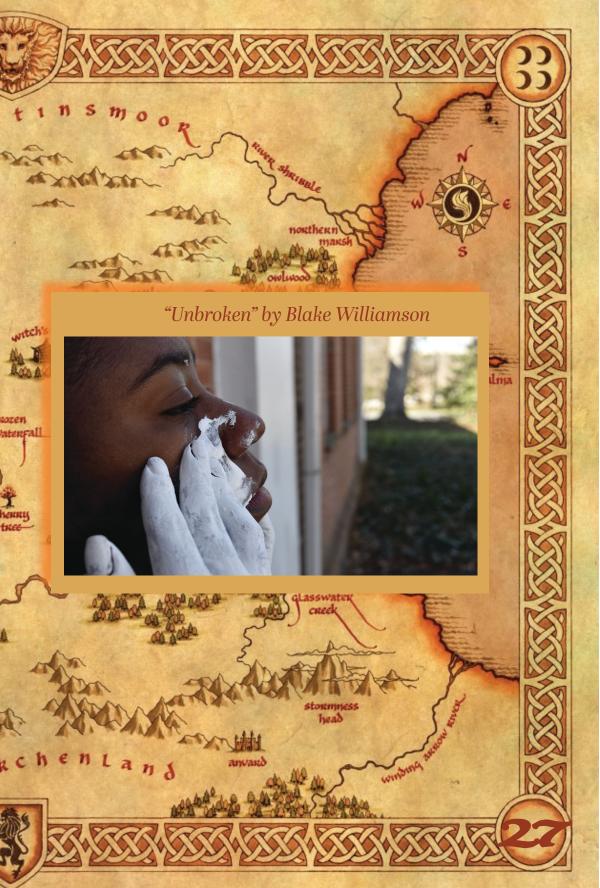


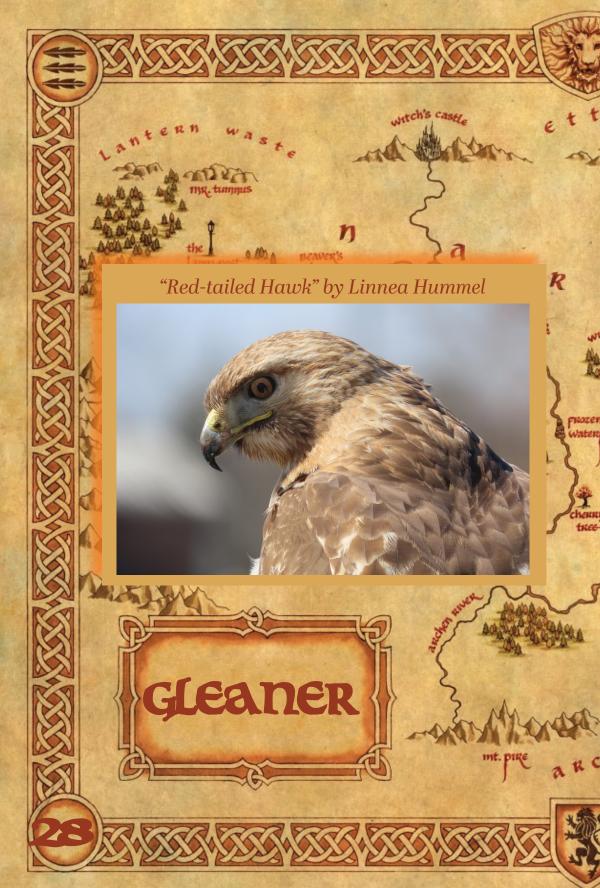


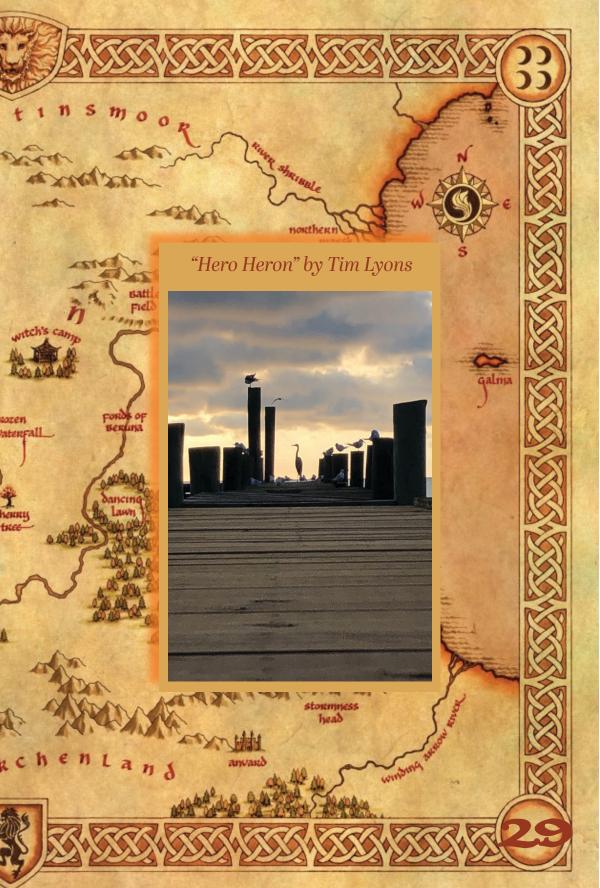
















One Summer When I Was 12 by John Sprinkle

summers wandering mountains with grown men, removed from any contact with their parents, family, or friends. But I was not a typical 12 year old. I attended an all-boys camp in western NC and grew to love hiking, one of the activities that we could do. That summer we decided to hike the Art Loeb Trail, a 30-mile hike in Pisgah National Forest not too far from camp. In the hiking community, the Art Loeb Trail is considered one of the hardest three-day hikes on the east coast. The Art Loeb Challenge, mirroring the run of a marathon, up and down 6,000-feet five times, was rarely completed. We planned to complete it in under 24 hours.

The night before the hike was a lengthy and sleepless one. We left our camp at midnight and drove an hour to the trail head. It was pitch black, illuminated only by the dim glow of our headlights. The daunting hike launched straight up, farther than the eye could see, with a 6,000 foot incline on unstable ground. Thirty minutes into our climb, it started pouring rain, Pisgah Forest was just like a rain forest. The entire climb I

questioned myself as to why I would do this, and what would happen if I were to just turn back now. But still, I trekked on.

When we reached the peak of the first mountain, we were welcomed by an endless blanket of clouds. Our headlamps were deemed useless unless something was right in front of us. We strained our necks to take one last look at the world below us and the mountain we had conquered. We started our descent. We moved hastily, and walking downhill it is imperative that you move fast in order to make up for any time you lost going up. We were basically falling down, using all of our might to kick our legs out in front of us. We enjoyed this race, as going down hill is a reward for all the steep miles of this trail. When we got to the bottom we took our first water break. In order to use our time wisely and not waste it on breaks, as well as to get out of the pouring rain, we timed them and quickly moved forward. We said goodbye to the flat ground comforting our feet and started our ascent up the second mountain.

When we got to the top, we were relieved to see our first signs of bright light. We had only been hiking for a couple of hours, yet it was already a taxing job, as hiking itself is not the joy we sought. Our excitement and pride came from the reward of climbing something larger than ourselves, conquering something older than life itself, and the beauty of seeing for miles and miles once we reached a peak. This satisfaction of feeling like you can see forever was one of the things that drew me to hiking. During the Art Lobe Challenge, I felt like the mountains consumed my entire aching body, there was barely any time to look and see what we had achieved, as everything began to blur together.

Eventually, we made it to Black Mountain, the halfway point. It was about 3:00 in the afternoon when we started our hike up the tallest and steepest mountain on the trail. We were behind on time, so we decided to run up it, our backs soaked from the pounding of raindrops mixing with our sweat.

Half way up Black Mountain I heard the loudest noise I had ever experienced, and a split second later a light flashed right before our group. Everyone fell over and I could not see anything for a good two minutes, my eyes haunted with white spots of light were clouded and misty. When I regained my senses I realized that lighting had just struck 10-feet from me. To describe the

panic and confusion I was dealing with at that moment is impossible. I still have night terrors about the time I was almost struck by lightning. After the lightning stopped we eventually made it down Black Mountain and finally completed the hike with about an hour and a half left to spare. After the lightning I don't remember much about the hike. My brain was on autopilot with one goal, get home safe.

Throughout the trials of the hike I had fainted due to the lack of water. My feet were cut with blisters around my entire foot. Chafing caused my inner thighs to bleed. I had bruises on my back from my pack. Looking back on this trip I do not know how I managed to complete it. I was only 12 and I had just completed a challenge that some of the most experienced backpackers will not attempt.

When I completed the hike I felt like a hero doing something that not even grown men can accomplish. A rush of adrenalin flowed through my body and I felt empowered. I thought for sure I was going to be on the news or talked about on blog posts. But much to my young dismay, when I got home there was nothing, no congratulations or praise, for no one else could have possibly known the extent of what I had just done. But

I knew, and that was all I needed. I had risked my life doing something I loved, I completed a task that is almost impossible. I was not even a teenager yet.

The trip was one of the most humbling experiences in my life. This trip solidified my love for backpacking and being outdoors because if I was willing to almost die for it then my love for it had to be strong and impenetrable. The very next summer I went to Colorado with the same group of people and hiked the entire Colorado trail. As I grew, so did my love for hiking. I owe it all to the cold, painful, and rainy trails of the Art Loeb.

A Jish In The Sea by Tyler Leon

ancing in the moonlight She was a conductor in the wind Performing the most beautiful song, Oh, how that song made my heart ring Like it was the end of a long school day, She was as beautiful as the sunset over calm water Looking upon her as if she were a Picasso painting In this moment I knew she had me hooked The scary thought that I'm somehow a fish and It was her choice to keep me or throw me back into the crashing waves and now after all this time above the water after nearly suffocating I'm back in the ocean

Blue by Lysette Eloi

'm in the middle of the ocean, lost at sea.

As I'm looking in the water all I can see is me.

My face, my tears and fears staring back at me.

50 shades of blue but no one will ever fully know me.

I'm transparent but I'm dark, things I will never understand. People sit and watch me but they will never comprehend how my waves crashing against the shoreline is a call for help. I build myself up and crash just to get closer to you. I am alone. I try to bring you close. I try to let you know I use my rip tide to guide you but you never survive. I make up 71% of this earth yet I feel so small. I am a mystery no one can fully explore me.

Monsters by Maggie Driscoll

here are monsters here,

Dancing in the shadows Of each and every thought.

Teeth speak lies,

the monster resides ever so near.

There are monsters here always waiting to spring to drag sharp teeth through thoughts so deep.

From A to ₹ by Tyler Leon

Anxious Blood Coursing, the Devilish Envy Feels Grim, Hysterical and Isolated, Just Knowing Love Mocks me, Not Openly but Painfully, i Quickly Relapse, my Sad Thoughts Unbearably Violent, Wrecking like Xylitol, You Zapped

my heart one last time

10.22.2020

by Lydia Anderson-Dearborn

hey say that art imitates life. Every brushstroke, every word, every breath is a desperate grasp towards a perfection even beyond the divine. And when it doesn't work? Paint over it. Erase. Start over. Forget. Is life not the same? A new you rests on the horizon; every day is a decision. Not satisfied? Hit the road and never look back. You go far enough and nothing looks the same, no one talks the same. and no one knows your name. And yet no matter how many times we start over we fool ourselves into the fantasy that pain can be erased, that it can be painted over. We believe that the big rubber eraser for big mistakes you bought at the dollar store when you were ten years old can completely remove the pain in your eyes. Pencil marks carve valleys that remain after the graphite is smudged away. White paint can cover mistakes but they'll always whisper from underneath. No matter what you try, the scars forever leave hollows in our minds.

Art imitates life.

Creature by Maggie Driscoll

reature of Chaos! Harbinger of Doom. Sitting alone in a room.

Foul creature! Harsh teacher. What is your nature Wearing a face of gloom.

Creature of Chaos! Harbinger of Doom. You've made yourself famous, twisted and heinous.

Trouble and worry are your calls to glory fire and plague sickness and death if not you- then who?

Creature of gloom, Harbinger of Doom, what is your nature alone in a room.

Remember? by Symphani Lorenz

remember the times we met on the playground at recess.
The times we laughed until we couldn't breathe.
The times we chased each other until our legs gave out.
The times we slept over each other's houses and stayed up all night long.
The times we believed the world would never separate us.

I hope you still remember the times we made funny faces at each other in the middle of class.

The times we played video games. The times we switched lunches.

The times we would chase after the ice cream truck.

The times where everything was so simple.

Do you remember the times we hugged each other? The times we talked about the future? The times we hoped to see each other again? The times we came to each other's birthday parties? The times we were still together?

I wish for those times to come back again.
When I didn't have to miss you every day.
I didn't have to wonder what you look like or what you are doing now.
When I wouldn't have to think if you still remembered who I am.

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Best wishes as you write the next chapter of your life.

THE GLEANER IS ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS
FOR ITS 2021–2022 ISSUE
Meht Year's Theme is

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